

CALFED BAY-DELTA PROGRAM

May 25, 1995

The San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary is a critically important part of California's natural environment and economy. In recognition of the serious problems facing the region and the complex resource management decisions that must be made, the State of California and the federal government are working together to stabilize, protect, restore, and enhance the Bay-Delta Estuary.

Basis for Cooperation

State-federal cooperation was formalized in June 1994 with the signing of a Framework Agreement by the involved state and federal agencies. The state agencies include the Resources Agency, the Department of Water Resources, the Department of Fish and Game, the California Environmental Protection Agency, and the State Water Resources Control Board. Federal Agencies include the Bureau of Reclamation and the Fish and Wildlife Service, within the Department of the Interior, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Marine Fisheries Service, part of the Department of Commerce. These agencies with management and regulatory responsibility in the Bay-Delta Estuary are working together as CALFED, and will provide policy direction and oversight for the process.

The Framework Agreement pledged that state and federal agencies would work together in three areas of Bay-Delta management:

- Water quality standards formulation;
- Coordination of State Water Project and Central Valley Project operations with regulatory requirements; and
- Long term solutions to problems in the Bay-Delta Estuary.

Since June of last year significant progress has been made in all three areas. These management efforts have included close cooperation not only among State and federal agencies, but involvement of urban and agricultural water users, fishing interests, environmental organizations, business, and others. These groups--the stakeholders in resources of the Bay-Delta Estuary--play an important role in the collaborative process of solving problems.

Long Term Solutions

The third element of the Framework Agreement called for a joint State-federal process to develop long-term solutions to problems in the Bay-Delta Estuary related to fish and wildlife, water supply reliability, natural disasters, and water quality. The intent is to develop a comprehensive and balanced plan which addresses all of the resource problems. This effort will be carried out under the policy direction of CALFED. The public will have a central role in the development of long term solutions. A group of more than 30 citizen-advisors selected from California's agricultural, environmental, urban, business, fishing, and other interests who have a stake in finding long term solutions for the problems of the Bay-Delta Estuary has been chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act as the Bay-Delta Advisory Council. BDAC will advise CALFED on the program mission, problems to be addressed, and objectives for the CALFED Bay-Delta Program. These citizen advisors will also provide a forum to help ensure public participation, and will review reports and other materials prepared by CALFED staff.

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program will be managed by an interdisciplinary, interagency staff team and will be assisted by technical experts from state and federal agencies as well as consultants. The CALFED Bay-Delta Program will carry out a three-phase process to achieve broad agreement on long term solutions. First, a clear definition of the problems to be addressed and a range of solution alternatives will be developed. Second, to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act and the National Environmental Policy Act, a program level or first-tier Environmental Impact Report and Environmental Impact Statement will be prepared to identify impacts associated with the various alternatives. Finally, a project-level or second-tier EIR/EIS will be prepared for each element of the selected alternative.

The first phase of work for the CALFED Bay-Delta Program, developing a range of alternatives, will include extensive efforts to obtain public input through workshops and other means, preparation of a Notice of Intent and Notice of Preparation pursuant to NEPA and CEQA, and public scoping sessions to determine the focus and content of the EIR/EIS. The first phase is scheduled to conclude in early 1996 with the development of a range of alternatives for achieving long term solutions to the problems of the Bay-Delta Estuary.

For additional information, contact:

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